

REMARKS

The claims now pending in the application are Claims 16 to 20. Claim 16 is the only independent claim. Claims 1 to 15 previously were cancelled. Claims 19 and 20 are amended herein.

In the Official Action dated April 23, 2003, Claims 16 to 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,272,787 (Michael) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,162,914 (Takahashi). Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection respectfully are requested in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

The rejection of the claims over the cited art respectfully is traversed. Nevertheless, without conceding the propriety of the rejection, Claims 19 and 20 have been amended to correct inadvertent typographical errors relating to English spelling and grammar. Applicant submits that the amendments merely are formal in nature and do not narrow the scope of the claims. Support for the formal amendments may be found in the original disclosure. No new matter has been added.

The present invention relates to a novel image pickup method and apparatus. In one aspect, as recited in independent Claim 16, the present invention relates to an image pickup apparatus comprising an image sensor that picks up an image corresponding to an optical image, and produces a first field image signal and a second field image signal different from the first field image signal. A combining circuit combines the first field image signal and the second field image signal in one of a first mode, where a part of the first field image signal and a part of the second field image signal are selected to

produce one field image signal, and a second mode, where the first field image signal and the second field image signal are added to produce one field image signal. A detecting circuit detects an amount of motion vector and produces a detection signal in comparison with a predetermined threshold level, and a control circuit selects the first mode or the second mode in response to the detection signal from the detecting circuit. Thus, in this aspect, the combining circuit combines the first and second field image signals in one of: (1) a first mode, where a part of the first field image signal and a part of the second field image signal are selected to produce one field image signal, and (2) a second mode, in which one field image signal is produced simply by adding the first field image signal and the second field image signal.

Applicant submits that the prior art fails to anticipate the present invention. Moreover, Applicant submits that there are differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art, such that the subject matter taken as a whole would not have been obvious at the time the invention was made to one of ordinary skill in the art.

The Michael '787 patent relates to a TV picture freeze system, and discloses a system capable of capturing a video frame comprising the first and second fields. However, as acknowledged in the Official Action, the Michael '787 patent fails to disclose or suggest the feature of producing one field image signal by selecting a part of the first field image signal and a part of the second field image signal. Moreover, Applicant submits that the Michael '787 patent fails to disclose or suggest the feature of combining circuit that combines the first field image signal and second field image signal in a (second) mode, in which one field image signal is produced simply by adding two field image

signals (the first and second field image signals), as disclosed and claimed in the present application. Rather, Applicant submits the Michael '787 patent merely discloses, e.g., in Figures 2 and 5, and the corresponding text at column 3, lines 57 and column 4 line 68 to column 5, line 6, to produce one frame image signal using two field image signals.

The Takahashi '914 patent relates to an image sensing device with diverse storage frames used in picture composition, and discloses an image sensing device adapted to compose an appropriate single picture from a plurality of pictures of different exposures obtained from the same subject, wherein the camera operation is controlled using as a reference one of the plurality of pictures of different exposures. However, as acknowledged in the Official Action, the Takahashi '914 patent fails to disclose or suggest the feature of detecting a motion vector, and moreover further fails to teach or suggest the feature of controlling image synthesization in accordance with a detected motion vector, as disclosed and claimed in the present application. Although the Takahashi '914 patent is alleged to teach producing one field image signal by selecting part of a first field image signal and a part of a second field image signal, nowhere is the Takahashi '914 patent understood to disclose or suggest the feature of combining circuit that combines the first field image signal and second field image signal in a (second) mode, in which one field image signal is produced simply by adding two field image signals (the first and second field image signals), as disclosed and claimed in the present application. Accordingly, the Takahashi '914 patent is not understood to remedy the deficiencies of the Michael '787 patent. Nor is the Takahashi '914 patent understood to add anything to the Michael '787 patent that would make obvious the claimed invention.

For the above reasons, Applicant submits that independent Claim 16 is allowable over the cited art.

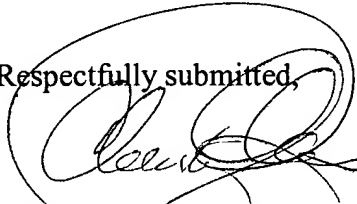
Claims 17 to 20 depend from Claim 16 and are believed allowable for the same reasons. Moreover, each of these dependent claims recites additional features in combination with the features of its respective base claim, and is believed allowable in its own right. Individual consideration of the dependent claims respectfully is requested.

Applicant requests that the present Amendment be entered under 37 CFR § 1.116. Applicant submits that the present amendments merely are formal in nature, reduce the number of issues for consideration, and place the claims in allowable form. Applicant believes the present response was necessitated by the outstanding Official Action, and submits that the present amendments were not previously made because the inadvertent errors were discovered upon review of the prior claims after receiving the Official Action.

Applicant believes that the present Amendment/response is responsive to each of the points raised by the Examiner in the Official Action, and submits that the application is in allowable form. Favorable consideration of the claims and passage to issue of the present application at the Examiner's earliest convenience earnestly are solicited.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



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